

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 AID-20 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11

FRB-02 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12

CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-10 SS-15 STR-08

CEA-02 L-03 DOTE-00 PA-03 PRS-01 USIA-15 RSR-01 /171 W

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R 310625Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1601

INFO AMCONSUL BRISBANE

AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

AMCONSUL PERTH

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

USMISSION OECD PARIS

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIN, EIND, EMIN, AS

SUBJ: GOA PROPOSAL FOR RESTRUCTURING AUSTRALIAN AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY

REF: CANBERRA 4792

1. THIS MESSAGE CONTAINS ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND ON AUTOMOTIVE PROPOSAL REPORTED REFTEL.

2. MUCH PRESS COVERAGE OF CABINET ANNOUNCEMENT SUGGESTED THAT A PLAN ALREADY EXISTED. SPECIFICALLY HOWEVER CABINET ACTION WAS TO REQUEST THE TARIFF BOARD TO RECOMMEND A DETAILED PLAN, DESIGNED TO MEET A COMPREHENSIVE AND AMBITIOUS LIST OF OBJECTIVES SPECIFIED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

3. THE SPECIFIED OBJECTIVES ARE: (1) TO IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY

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WITH WHICH PRODUCTIVE RESOURCES ARE USED. (2) TO RECOGNIZE THE

INTERESTS OF CONSUMERS. (4) TO MAINTAIN A VIABLE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY (A) ACHIEVING HIGHEST POSSIBLE TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC EFFICIENCY WITH HIGH AUSTRALIAN CONTENT (B) ACHIEVING PRODUCT RATIONALIZATION (C) WELL LOCATED FOR SOCIAL, EMPLOYMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL PURPOSES (D) WHICH MAINTAINS HIGH LEVEL OF SAFETY IN CONSTRUCTION AND USE, WITH EFFECTIVE ANTI-POLLUTION DEVICES (E) HAS IMPROVED LABOR RELATIONS AND PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES. (4) SUBSTANTIAL AUSTRALIAN PARTICIPATION, INCLUDING EQUITY, IN THE INDUSTRY.

THE BOARD IS INSTRUCTED TO CONSIDER ALL MEASURES WHICH MIGHT ACHIEVE THESE GOALS, NOTING THAT THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDERS THAT NEITHER TARIFFS ALONE NOR POLICIES AKIN TO THE PRESENT MOTOR VEHICLE PLANS WOULD BE EFFECTIVE IN ACHIEVING ALL OF THE SPECIFIED OBJECTIVES.

AS A RESULT THE BOARD'S EVENTUAL RECOMMENDATIONS WILL PRESUMABLY INVOLVE NOT ONLY SPECIFIC TERMS FOR THE ADMISSION OF NISSAN AND TOYOTA AS MANUFACTURERS, BUT ALL ASPECTS OF THE EXISTING INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT POLICIES RELATING TO IT.

THE ORIGINAL PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT STATED THE BOARD REPORT WOULD BE REQUIRED BY OCTOBER 31, 1973. BUT THE OFFICIAL REFERRAL TO THE BOARD DID NOT SPECIFY A DATE AND MERELY REQUESTED URGENT HANDLING. MOST COMMENTATORS BELIEVE THE REPORT WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE UNTIL LATER THAN OCTOBER.

4. FOR THIS REASON, THE EVENTUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ANNOUNCED INTENTION TO RESTRUCTURE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY, INCLUDING THE QUESTION OF WHETHER NISSAN AND TOYOTA ACTUALLY ENTER AUSTRALIA AS MANUFACTURERS, WILL DEPEND UPON TARIFF BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE DECISIONS TAKEN THEREON BY THE GOVERNMENT.
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